

THE VALLEY FARMER--DEVOTED TO THE TRUE INTERESTS OF FARMERS, MECHANICS, AND WORKING MEN.

VALLEY FARMER.

FULL DIRECTION FOR THE CULTIVATION OF THE OAT-GRAIN.

To prepare the ground where the hedge is to be set, a strip must be marked out five or six feet in width, along the line where you want to grow; this must be plowed, throwing the earth out from the middle, then carefully smoothed with a harrow, and made in a good state of cultivation before you commence planting.

Having staked the line, take a small cord some five or six rods in length, mark it off every six inches, run down a socket every six inches opposite the line, then insert the plants a little deeper than when they came out of the ground, pressing the earth well to the bottom of the roots.

The plant should be cut down within one or two inches of the ground; they may grow the first season without further trimming if in a thrifty condition; the second season they may be cut down twice, as follows. Early in the spring I mixed the whole well together; and after it had heated somewhat, I carried it to the field and planted my corn upon it; and notwithstanding the great and severe drought, it produced a very good crop. Yours truly,

P. H. RUSSEL.
Peru, Ill.

CELLAR BOTTOMS.

The first requisite for a dry cellar, is to have it well drained. It is possible to shut out water with a cement after the manner of shutting it within a cistern, even where the soil is generally saturated with water; but such a thing would not be very practicable, especially if the walls themselves be not laid in a mortar made of hydraulic cement. Where a cellar is not subjected to an influx of water, the bottom may be made quite dry by putting down a bed of stones laid in water-mortar, and then spreading over the surface a grouting or coat of the same kind of mortar.

This can be leveled off as smooth as a floor, and if it is properly made, it will become almost as hard as stone, and effectually keeps out water from below.

Water lime, called also hydraulic cement, is a species of lime, or ground stone, which, mixed with good sand after the manner of using common lime, will not be softened by water after it has once become hardened. Sometimes it will even harden under water, though not as well as if it was first left to dry in the air. It is used for plastering the walls of cisterns, tanks, banks, &c. The mortar is mixed like common mortar, but it must be made no faster than it is wanted for use, for it cannot be spread after it once sets, which it does very soon.

Water-lime, or hydraulic cement, is quite variable in price, depending upon its quality, the nearness of the quarry where it is obtained.

The frames should be made of good sound planks—the back plank may be two feet wide, and the end ones so sloped as to make fifteen inch plank do for the front. A frame calculated for four sashes, three feet in width by six in length, as above described, should be nearly thirteen feet long, and six broad at the top.

The frame being set over the pit, and properly fastened, the fresh dung should be spread regularly in the pit to the depth of twenty to twenty-four inches; if the dung be in good heating condition, cover it six or eight inches deep with mould—then lay on the sashes, and protect the beds from the inclemency of the weather.

In two or three days the rank steam will pass off; it will then be necessary to stir the mould before the seed is sown, to prevent the growth of young weeds that may be germinating; then sow the seed either in shallow drifts or broad cast as easily as possible, reserving a small quantity of warm mould to be sown lightly over the seed.—*Bridgeman's Gardener's Assistant*.

SEED POTATOES.

Having noticed with great vexation since my return to this part of the country, the great deterioration of my favorite esculent, the Potato, will you allow me the privilege of your columns to make known to your numerous readers an easy and quick method of "renewing" or restoring the potato to its original soundness, neatness and size?

The plan is: Keep back some seed potatoes for six or seven weeks after the usual time for planting, say till the last week of June, or the first week of July, and then plant and cultivate them the same as stock potatoes. They will grow until the frost withers the vines, when they should be dug. As they have not had time to mature, they will be quite small—not more than an inch or an inch and a half through; but they should all be carefully gathered, and kept safe from the frost through the winter, and planted at the usual time of planting in the spring—one of the small potatoes being sufficient for the seed in each hill. The result will be large sized, sound, mealy potatoes, as I have proven by actual trial. I hope it will be tried by some of our farmers this year.

CHAS. SEAGER.
St. Louis, Feb. '56.

From the Rural American.

MANURE HEAPS.

Farmers generally fail, as much for the want of proper care in the management of their manure heaps, as any one thing; and I have no doubt that there might be, at least, one-third more manure made, of an equal value, on most farms, than is made at the present time, by a judicious gathering of such materials as the

farm itself affords, and mixing them with the droppings of the cattle—at the same time costing much less than to purchase manure at a distance.

Here, please let me tell you how I managed, two years ago, to make manure enough from eight sheep to manure half an acre of corn.

In the first place, I covered the stable floor in which the sheep were to be fed during the winter, with maple leaves, some eight or nine inches deep. I then carried the barn, from an adjacent swamp, enough muck to cover the leaves ten or twelve inches thick, and to complete the arrangement, I went to a load of the dust, etc., that remained after raking off the coal, and put upon the muck; this prepared my stable for reception of the sheep.

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HOT BEDS.

Some gardeners make their hot beds on the level ground, but it is always safe to make them in pits from eighteen inches to two feet deep; in order to do this the pits should be dug in autumn, or any other grain. Mixed with cut hay, stalks or something of the kind, stock greatly relish it, and readily fatten on it.

Will not our friends give the subject a little attention, and sow a few acres of barley the coming spring, if it is only for experiment? Our word for it, their parishes will be none the lighter, and their stock none the poorer next spring in consequence.

The mode of cultivation is, or was when we helped our father to raise it, similar to that of oats—it, however, only requires about two-thirds as much seed per acre. Like oats, it spoils easily by heating, and on this account should never be stored away in a green or damp state. The straw of spring barley is mostly too short for binding. In our boyhood days it was culled, raked into large bunches, thrown on the wagon with a "barley fork," and set off on the barn floor with horses; but how it should be treated in these days of reapers and threshers, we will leave others to determine.—*Ind Farm.*

HARLEY INSTEAD OF OATS.
In No. 3 of our present volume, we published a communication from a correspondent, in which the writer asserts his confidence that he can grow "as many bushels of barley per acre as of oats"—the one 48 lbs., the other 32 lbs.

Having abandoned the cultivation of barley for many years past, we were unable to judge of the correctness of the assertion, but it struck us at the time as being worthy of further notice and further trial. That bright barley straw is superior to all others for stock, and perhaps nearly equal to good hay, we have little doubt; and if 48 lbs. of grain can be grown in the same amount of ground which would produce but 32 of oats, we'd at once abandon the cultivation of the latter and take to the former.

We incline to think the writer is still in error; yet there can be little doubt but if less oats were grown, and more barley, we would be none the poorer. Oats are universally admitted to be a great exhauster of the soil, and we have so long cropped our poor lands with it, that a change is absolutely desirable. Barley is no great impoverisher of the soil, and leaves the ground in a fine, moist condition for wheat. The grain, when ground, is, in our opinion, superior to corn, oats or any other grain. Mixed with cut hay, stalks or something of the kind, stock greatly relish it, and readily fatten on it.

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LOOK TO YOUR SEED CORN.

There are but few farmers who are not aware that it sometimes happens that seed corn, or a large proportion of it fails to germinate, having in some way lost its vitality. The cause which produces this remarkable result, is but vaguely understood, but it is generally believed to be in some way connected with the cold of the preceding winter. It does not seem probable that the vitality of corn, like peach buds, is always destroyed when the mercury sinks lower than a given temperature, but other causes doubtless have something to do in the matter. We should not think it strange that corn which had not been thoroughly dried out before the occurrence of the extremely cold weather should fail to grow, but further than this, we shall not pursue the subject at present.

It is a safe and economical plan which some farmers adopt of testing their seed corn every spring before planting time comes by sowing some of it to sprout. In this way, if any portion of the seed, or all of it, has lost its vitality, the fact is ascertained before it is planted, and thus a vast amount of perplexity, labor, time and means is avoided.

The spring of 1852, (if our memory is not at fault,) will long be remembered among corn-growers. Hundreds, perhaps thousands of acres in our own country had to be replanted, the seed, in many instances, having been totally worthless, and in far more as little grew that it was best to remark the ground. In order to be prepared for a like emergency in future, every farmer should put some of his seed corn to sprout, in order to ascertain, before the time arrives, whether it will grow.

As the past winter has been unprecedentedly cold, it is highly necessary that this be attended to the present spring. Let us be sure that we plant good seed.—*Ind Farm.*

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